

DULUTH AMERICAN INDIAN COMMISSION MEETING
Monday, April 21, 2008 - 5:00 p.m.
Room 402 City Hall
Draft Meeting Summary

Members Present: Michele Gordon, Dr. Robert Powless, Donna Ennis, Warner Wirta, Tony LaDeaux, Joy Dorscher, Ricky DeFoe

Excused Absent: Beatrice Kitto

Staff present: Kathie Severson, Katie Nickolay, Dave Holbeck

Others present: See sign-in sheets

CALL TO ORDER, APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND INTRODUCTIONS:

Request by Joy Dorscher to move agenda item 5. D under item 3. and Donna Ennis indicated for item 5. C, that Jim Mallory couldn't be here so Michele will be talking on this point.

Motion to approve the agenda by Warner, seconded by Tony. Agendas stand as approved.

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE MARCH 17, 2008 MEETING:

Change "this training" to "the CJI meeting the first Monday of each month".

Dr. Powless made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected, seconded by Joy. March Minutes stand as approved.

COMMUNITY PUBLIC FORUM / OPEN PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

Ron Boshey talked about an issue recently brought to his attention by the inmates at the Regional Correctional Center. There appears to be a bias against Native religious practices (burning sage, hanging sage and cedar, gathering, etc.) and Ron hopes to help these men get more rights. He thinks someone should be able to come in and do a pipe or one of the men in there should be allowed to do it. It was suggested that the Port Rehab Work Release Program staff would be people who could be contacted on this matter. Dr. Powless said that Indian Legal may also be a contact. Ron indicated that Eugene Boshey Jr. can be contacted to get more info about this issue. Ricky mentioned that the hospitals often have the same issues because of unfamiliarity with the Indian Religious Freedom Act. Michele said when employees that know about these rights leave, new employees have to be educated about the right to pray and smudge. Verna Cyrette spoke about how she lost on a case and went to appeals court in February. She talked about discrimination and prejudice issues. Donna related information about gatherings Verna may want to attend.

OLD BUSINESS:

Center of American Indian and Minority Health – UMD – Tara Loushine

Tara presented information on three summer programs at UMD and FDL for high school and undergrad students interested in health care professions. May 2nd is the application deadline, but applications will be reviewed after the deadline until the programs are full. A stipend will be offered for some of the programs. All these programs are for American Indians and they don't have to be enrolled with a tribe. There is criteria looked at for academic standing but it will be a holistic review with transcripts, an essay, and letters of reference. The problem based learning aspect is a small group activity. 100% of participants in the programs moved onto the next grade, showing high success rates. The students learn how to teach themselves but there is not storytelling specifically. There are 35 Native medical students at the U of M, which is the second largest number in the nation (Oklahoma has the highest number).

Update on Commission Liaison with the Children's Justice Initiative (CJI) – Donna

Donna had no update. They are still setting things up. Tabled.

Lake Superior Barrels Disposal, Report from DAIC Subcommittee, Discussion on Possibility of Inviting City Councilor Jay Fosle to Attend Future Meeting

Regarding Barrels and Spirit Mountain – Warner and Ricky have been in contact with the MN Dept. of Health. They are only reiterating what is already known. They refer to quite a bit of what the US Army Core of Engineers has already done. Glen Maxim, a researcher for Lake Superior Assoc. has written commentary to the Dept. of Health stating his opposition to the MN Dept. of Health information. Warner does not know what is in his report. Warner wrote a letter to a toxicologist in the state, Carl Herbranson. Carl called Warner on the phone. Warner read a reply that he sent to Carl as follow up to the phone call (see handout). Warner thinks there needs to be testing of the sediments from rusting leaky barrels over the years. A meeting that was suppose to happen with Red Cliff in April still has not been held. Warner suggested others write to Tammy Eshenaur this issue. Ricky said they are looking to do photographic survey of dump areas. He thinks that they should take samples and test them. Ricky said if Red Cliff doesn't come here, we're going there to add a voice.

Dr. Powless asked if the Commission should invite City Councilor, Jay Fosle to a meeting. There is a Jay Fosle enrolled with Red Cliff, commission not sure if the City Councilor is one in the same. Warner thinks he is a person of interest to invite to a meeting. Commissioners asked if John Judd could invite him and see when Fosle can attend a meeting. The June meeting may be an appropriate time.

Indian Center Project Update – Ellen O'Neil

Ellen O'Neil indicated that she was there to present the YWCA's perspective on the status of the project. The YWCA has been waiting 3 ½ years for the purchase to happen and Ellen indicated the Y just cannot wait any longer. The purchase agreement for the main building expired March 31, 2008. While there is no purchase agreement for the newer Trepanier Hall addition, the Y agreed to discount the cost for the older

building because Trepanier Hall would be purchased for the appraised value. Ellen also stated that the YWCA has lost \$381,000 while waiting for the purchase of the first building to happen. The Y feels like they have been good partners in this project but would like to have the sale happen by May 1st. The Y asked if everyone could work together to figure out how to make the sale happen.

Maria Danz, from AICHO, discussed the project status from AICHO's prospective. She gave details regarding secured funds and what is left to assemble. She also referred to issues that still needed resolution. There was further discussion with the commission regarding the project. Dr. Powless asked if AICHO is able to purchase the old building by May 1st, would the Y take a purchase agreement for Trepanier even though it might take a few more months to come up with the payment for it. Ellen and Maria said yes, the buildings won't be sold at the same time. Last October they got the 3 million from the MHFA. In the last month they have gotten 45,000 in new grants for the project. The project is large and requires a lot of money and that takes time. Maria says they are close to closing on the project. She talked about raising money from a lot of different places and the roadblocks AICHO has faced. They are doing an analysis to see if it would be financially beneficial to look at which way they should go with funding. Maria said from AICHO's perspective they have raised 5 million and have a couple million left to go, she said she thinks they are in a good position right now. Maria talked about having a good faith belief and also AICHO has invested 150,000 into the project already and they will move forward to get this deal done. Ellen believes the project will get done but they cannot wait another year to get it done. She said the board is willing to negotiate again but they can only give another 3 months. Tony asked about road blocks. Dr. Bob asked if it was feasible for the Commission to expect AICHO to purchase the old building by the 1st of May. Maria said she thinks AICHO is close but she couldn't make that promise. Michele asked that Sherry or Maria come to the next meeting. Ellen asked if there is something that can happen to get people excited about the Center. Grand Portage and FDL both have committed resources to the project. The Y Board is meeting tomorrow from 4:30-6 about this project. The Y has let this happen and have taken financial hardship and they cannot wait anymore. Sherry will be back in the office tomorrow. The DAIC decided to schedule a special meeting for Monday, April 28, 2008 to meet with AICHO.

Spirit Mountain Recreation Area, Long Range Plan – Renee Mattson

Renee Matson was not at the meeting.

Bi-aus-wah Bridge – Dr. Powless

Dr. Powless announced that the signs for the Bi-aus-wah Bridge in honor of Native Veterans are now in place on both sides. He indicated that this was due to efforts by Genie Stark of the City Auditors office, who noticed that this project had been sitting for years and she got the project done. Dr. Powless encouraged everyone to take a ride through Fond du Lac to see the signs. Dr. Powless said Ricky has agreed to do a ceremony out there within the next few weeks, Dr. Powless said he'd like to have a nice ceremony with the FDL honor guard and also invite Genie Stark. When it is worked out,

the Commission will be invited. A Saturday morning is in mind for it. Joy asked if it would be appropriate to have the media there. Ricky said it would be good to have the media there but not for when the sacred items are out and being used.

It was also announced that Saturday May 3rd is the FDL TCC Powwow.

NEW BUSINESS –

ICWA Issues - Indian Foster Care Programs –Donna Ennis

Donna passed around brochures. There are 4 Native foster care programs in the area. Path, the County, FDL has an on- and off-reservation program and one other. Donna spoke about Path. She started the program 15 years ago and has served over 500 Native children. Currently, Path has 27 foster homes, 12 are Native, 12 other are Caucasian and the other 3 homes are bi-racial homes. There are 54 kids currently in the program, 27 of them are Native kids. Path is different for 2 reasons, they are aware of a history of US government policy to separate parents from kids and a disproportionate amount of Native kids in out of home placements. Donna read some stats about the Native kids in foster care. At Path they also help birth parents become involved. Path can work to place Native kids with their relatives for foster care. Donna feels that the Native families have to work harder than the non-Native families to adhere to the rules of the White world. Dr. Powless asked if the kids do better in foster care when placed with relatives or are they better off not being with relatives? Donna said that the Native kids that come in are extended family so she doesn't really see kids being with their relatives as making a difference. The first thing Path does is help the child get enrolled and help connect them to their family. Ron Boshey asked if a band can help people get custody of kids from divorce. Donna said the tribe could help if the kids were in CHIPS court but ICWA doesn't work on custody hearings. The tribe can have as great a say as the parents do. Donna said there is also a whole family placement where the whole family can go into foster care. Path lets the adults in free and charges the county for the kids. Every whole family that goes into foster care usually only stays 3 months and the program uses positive Native parent curriculum. Donna feels that SLC social workers were doing a good job with adhering to ICWA and that they are not allowed to impose their own white standards to Native families. Tony said that may be a matter of opinion. Donna said she is doing what she can to keep Native families intact. Donna talked about the definition in the program of a Native family being that they could teach a strong sense of cultural identity to the Native kids. Donna said there are homes that are designated Native because a parent is enrolled at some obscure tribe but they aren't teaching the culture. Ricky commended Donna on the initiatives and the holistic approach with the foster family placements. He felt this goes above and beyond and was thinking outside the box. Donna said the support groups that Path offers attract Native people to this program over the other placement programs. There are respite programs that can allow families to get breaks from the kids that can allow the child and family to have a break from each other. Dr. Powless said these kids deserve the best opportunity we can find to help them come along. Donna commented on the resiliency of youth.

Mental Health Issues – Michele Gordon

Jim Mallory was unable to attend due to illness. Michele provided information on chemical dependency as well as mental health. To be a mental health provider one can have one of several license (LP, LMFT and LICSW). The access Center at Miller Dwan is one way to get inpatient care. There are also services at St. Luke's both in and out patient, as well as at the Duluth Clinic. Access is also available through the Emergency Room or through 911. Private practitioners are also available. Dr. Gary Kohls uses supplements rather than medications and he has had success in keeping clients off of medications for life. He conducts weekly group meetings as well. There are two Licensed therapists in the area, Linda Duhamel and Michelle Gordon. Michele spoke to several resources about their services. The T-Bird house has a no-use policy but they utilize traditional healers and practices. Access to a sweat lodge and drumming is available. Liberalis is a women's treatment in Cloquet and Carlton. They allow smudging in the program and allow people to work in the program in a traditional way. Harm reduction is a new program offered to individuals. It starts with where the individual is at and works with the person to eliminate one harming activity at a time. Liberalis women are open to working with cultural ways and a team approach. The detox center reports 30% of their clientele is Native. This can be viewed in several ways, it might be that more Native people are getting picked up and taken there. Al-Anon is recommended highly by Michele. The people who live on the street fare worse than those who have stable housing. The biggest thing is that people have those that care about them around.

ANNOUNCEMENTS, UPCOMING EVENTS AND COMMENTS FROM COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Dr. Powless: This Wednesday. at 4:15 at 203C in old Central, the race culture achievement group is meeting with ISD 709 administration to discuss educational plans. There is an achievement gap largely based on race in Duluth and what will they do about that in all the school district planning. He encourages people to stop in and say something. When looking at Indian kids, he finds it amazing that the schools (everywhere) don't realize kids are getting fed up with the traditional schools. There are 2 million kids in the US who are home-schooled and that number goes up by 10% every year. Those kids who are home-schooled do about 10% better on the ACT than the kids from the public school settings.

Warner: Warner was sad to not see Renee Matson coming here tonight. He wanted to give her information on how to contact members in the Indian community.

Tony: contacted Judd today about how to approach the city council. The money for the civilian review board is no longer an issue. Tony said his two kids faced a hard road in high school with racism but he wants to make this a better world for them.

Ricky: The program that Tara was talking about, if they could get a table at the Powwows, hopefully they could increase the numbers of Native students in the programs and who then get into Med school. He was able to get a lot of information about the Spirit Mountain issue, the barrels, and the IRB by talking about it at

Powwows. He was surprised about the Y/AICHO issue and said the Commission should get together with Sherry and speak about how to get this program moving forward. Ricky talked about meeting with people who have a stake in Spirit Mountain and the efforts he and Warner are taking to talk to people about this issue.

Donna: Had no news to share. She said the meeting room for Monday should be decided. Kathie Severson will confirm a room. The Commission will be talking with AICHO and they will report to Ellen.

Joy: Talked about how impressed she is with Donna and Donna's programs that she talked about today. Joy respects the fact that she looks at the quality of the foster parents.

Michele: Stressed the cautions of the psychotropic medications for young children and how that is labeling children.

NEXT MEETING/DATE/LOCATION: May 19, 2008 in Room 402 City Hall.

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned.